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DECEMBER

5TH, 1840.

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SALVATOR ROSA. No. II.



SALVATOR ROSA AND HIS WORKS

II.

We left Salvator Rosa at that point in his history when, through the notice which Lanfranco took of one of his pictures, a more ready market for them could be obtained.

The advantage thus gained had the effect of relieving Salvator from the worst of his distress; but it at the same time roused the feeling of independence in him, and led him to reply in the most cutting satires to the calumny and abuse which the other artists of Naples now began to heap on him, through envy of his superior talents. He procured for himself many enemies, by the epigrams and songs which his restless spirit poured forth against those whom he felt to be mentally his inferiors. But he fortunately acquired the good services and friendship of Ancillo Falcone, a pupil of Spagnuolo, and himself a distinguished painter; and might thus have attained a respectable position in his native city. But his ideas, feelings, and opinions were so uncompromising, that he would not consent to paint such subjects as happened to be in fashion at that time at Naples, such as martyrdoms, tortures, massacres, &c: he persisted in painting those sublime and natural scenes which were more congenial to his temperament. The consequence was, that he was still dependent on the dealers, though he obtained higher prices than before.

Finding that his exertions were insufficient to procure the means of living even respectably, with his mother and sisters, at Naples, he resolved to quit his native country altogether, and to seek employment elsewhere. Accordingly, in 1634, and consequently when he was about nineteen years of age, he left Naples, and went to Rome; travelling the greater part of the way on foot, with his wardrobe strapped to his back, and his portfolio before him. Milton visited Rome at the same time as Salvator Rosa, or as some say, two or three years later; the great poet was received with distinguished honours, whereas the poor painter had no friendly hand or heart to greet him.

Rome was at that time the rendezvous for artists of totally opposite styles; viz., those of Italy generally, and those of Flanders and Holland. The Italian painters usually chose subjects of an elevated cast,—either a representation of some of the exquisite scenes of nature, or groups embodying the most striking passages in the Bible. Whereas, the Flemish artists were prone to represent coarse and vulgar scenes, such as occur in the lives of the humbler classes in almost every city: those who have seen the “ale-house” scenes of Teniers, the “interiors” of Ostade, &c., will readily understand this style. Painters of this latter school were wholly repugnant to the taste and ideas of Salvator; and as he was too obscure to mingle among the great Italian artists of the times, he accustomed himself to wander amidst the classical scenes with which Rome and its environs abound, sketching wherever he went, and selling his sketches in the evening to the brokers and dealers in the Piazza Navona. He has left a poem of about a hundred lines, written by himself at this period, in which he discloses the bitter pangs and disappointments, the miseries and the sickness, which he experienced while residing at Rome. The marshes in the neighbourhood of the city are known to be the source of a malignant malaria, from which Salvator suffered much during his long rambles in their vicinity. He was attacked with fever; and being nearly penniless, was received into an hospital at Rome, where his life was saved. As it was, however, intimated to him,

that he could not recover his health but by returning to his native climate, he left Rome and wended his lonesome way to Naples, in 1635, more miserable in condition, and more depressed in mind than when he left it.

He found, on his return, that his mother had gone for refuge to the house of her brother, Paolo Grecco; and that his sister and her husband were plunged in the lowest depths of poverty. He once again roused his courage, and tried to provide the means of subsistence for himself and family. But the enmity of his old rivals rendered all his efforts unavailing; and he could scarcely sell enough of his productions to provide himself with the bare necessities of life. Some of his biographers have inveighed against the society and institutions of the times, which could make such a man struggle unavailingly against poverty and distress; but unless we knew all the collateral events, we could not say how much his misfortunes were due to himself: it is certain that his sarcastic and often bitter wit, together with his uncontrollable love of independence, and the strength of his imagination, would frequently have led such a man into trouble in any country and in any age.

Just at the period when Salvator was sinking into despondency, an event occurred which threw a gleam of sunshine over his prospects. Francesco Brancaccio, a Neapolitan noble who was made cardinal by Pope Urban VIII., sent to Naples for one Girolamo Mercuri, to take the office of *Maestro di Casa* in the splendid establishment which the cardinal had at Rome. This Mercuri had been a fellow-student and an ardent admirer of Salvator; and he now succeeded in persuading the indigent artist to accompany him to Rome. Salvator, arrived in Rome, was allowed an apartment in the cardinal's palace, and was invited to avail himself of all those advantages which the painting-schools of that city afforded. But his peculiar temperament again prevented him from following in the wake of other men; he disliked schools, patrons, copyists, and all that interfered with the unshackled exercise of his imagination. He refused to paint such subjects as were then in vogue at Rome; but continued to paint, whether he could find a sale for them or not, his bandits, rocky scenes, and wild copies from nature. The connoisseurs of Rome did not know what to think of the new artist; he despised the rules which they had been accustomed to follow, and they could only give the name of *capricci* (caprices) to his pictures.

The cardinal being made Bishop of Viterbo, Mercuri and Salvator accompanied him to that town, and this appears to have been the period at which the artist was introduced to the cardinal. An order was given to him to paint the portico and loggia of the episcopal palace in fresco, the subject being left to himself. He selected an imaginative subject, and pleased the cardinal so much as to obtain the honour of painting a grand altar-piece for the *Chiesa della Morte* at Viterbo. He selected as his subject the “Incredulity of St. Thomas,” and produced a picture which gained considerable praise, though not so much as in subsequent times. Circumstances which his biographers seem unable to explain, but which probably arose from the restless tone of his mind, caused him to leave the cardinal's protection after the lapse of about a year, and return to Naples. A certain degree of reputation had preceded his third return to his native city, and he found himself looked upon with more respect than before; he therefore immediately began to take measures to procure for himself an Italian reputation, in the full sense of the term. There were generally two exhibitions held every year

at Rome, at which the greatest works of the greatest painters were placed in juxtaposition. To one of these exhibitions Salvator sent a large picture of "Prometheus," which at once caused him to be ranked among the finest painters of the age:—his diminutive appellation of "Salvatoriello" instantly dropped: his picture was celebrated in prose and verse; and the Pantheon, under whose roof it was exhibited, became crowded with visitors. Salvator, yet in Naples, heard of the success of his picture, and at the entreaty of Mercuri, returned to Rome, where he hired a small house in the Via Babbuina, and gradually drew around him a small circle of friends whose tastes were congenial to his own.

His "Prometheus" brought him more fame than profit; he was still most worldly poor, when at the carnival of 1639 we find him entering on a new and strange career. One feature of the Roman carnivals of that period was a stage mounted on wheels, and occupied by actors and buffoons. The visitors at this carnival were attracted by the arrival of a stage, or moving platform, on which was a personage representing a Neapolitan actor, who, in his recitations and speeches, exhibited such genuine wit, such bitter satire, and such exquisite humour, that all were charmed with him; particularly as, at intervals, he sang some Neapolitan ballads, accompanying himself cleverly on the lute. Every one burned with impatience to know who this extraordinary man was; when, on going off the Corso, he lifted his mask, and showed the features of Salvator Rosa.—This circumstance had the effect of introducing Salvator to the *conversazioni* and assemblies of the nobles at Rome, where he exhibited the versatility of his talents as a poet, dramatic writer, composer, singer, musician, actor, and improvisatore; and gained that degree of distinction for which, as an artist, he had so long struggled.

It appears, however, that Salvator felt such a mode of life to be unworthy of a great painter; and he therefore left the *salons* of the great to return to his painting room. The patrons whom he had gained by his versatile talents now befriended him, by purchasing all his landscape pieces at good prices; and his landscapes soon occupied a place beside those of Claude Lorraine and Gaspar Poussin, who were among his contemporaries at Rome. He now became a man of personal distinction at Rome, dressing elegantly, and receiving company at his house, whom he attracted by the versatility of his talents. But he also succeeded in obtaining the more solid respect and friendship of Carlo Rossi, a Roman banker, who employed him as an artist, and visited him as a friend. Many other really worthy and distinguished men at Rome also sought his society; and from one of them, the Conte Carpigna, he obtained an order to paint a large battle-piece, at his own discretion.

He was now full of employment. Altar-pieces, colossal historical subjects, small landscapes, *concetti*,—all emanated from his pencil with extraordinary fertility; and his musical and poetical compositions appear to have equalled, in rapidity of execution, his pictures. He had now arrived at that period of his life for which he had long thirsted,—viz., when he could fix his own prices; and the largeness of these prices showed the estimation in which he held his own talents. Even to his friend and patron, Carlo Rossi, he would not abate a ducat; but often, when the price was more than Rossi felt disposed to pay, Salvator would, a day or two afterwards, send him the picture as a present. On another occasion, a Roman prince asked him the price of a certain picture;—"Two hundred scudi," was the reply. The noble

thought it too much; and returned the next day to ask what was the "lowest price." "Three hundred scudi," said Salvator. The nobleman was puzzled to know what this meant; and called a third time, to ask seriously what was the price demanded. "Four hundred scudi," was the answer: Salvator did not wait for further parley, but angrily took up the picture and broke a hole through it, to indicate his indignation at any attempt to "cheapen" his pictures. This independence, vanity, rashness,—call it what we will,—was perpetually appearing in the character and actions of Salvator, and always kept him in a broil with the host of enemies, whom, throughout his whole life, he contrived to make.

The year 1647 arrived, and with it the celebrated insurrection at Naples, headed by Masaniello, of which a sketch has been given in an early volume of our work*. No sooner did Salvator hear of an event which so much accorded with his restless and independent tone of mind, than he shut up his house at Rome, bade adieu to the easel and the pencil, and went to Naples, where he immediately joined Masaniello, as one of a company of young men called the *Compagnia della Morte*. Throughout the brief but momentous struggle between Masaniello and the Spanish Viceroy, Salvator fought as a volunteer soldier; but the ardour of his hopes and plans was checked by the death of Masaniello; and the consequent reinstatement of the viceroy in authority.

The present, as well as the former, article is illustrated by a copy of Salvator's pictures, which embody certain well-known incidents in the life of Diogenes the Cynic. This philosopher flourished in the fourth century before the Christian era. He taught that a wise man, in order to be happy, must try to keep himself independent of fortune, of men, and of himself: he must therefore despise riches, power, honour, arts and sciences, and all the pleasures of life. He tried to exhibit in his own person a model of Cynic virtue. He was satisfied with the coarsest food, was rigidly temperate, and displayed a wonderful neglect of personal conveniences. By day he walked through the streets of Athens barefoot, without any coat, with a long beard, a stick in his hand, a wallet on his shoulders, and a little wooden drinking-bowl: but seeing a boy drink water in the hollow of his hand, Diogenes threw away his bowl as a superfluity. (See Frontispiece to the present article.) At another time Diogenes was seen carrying a lantern through the streets of Athens in the daytime, and on being asked what he was looking for, replied, "I am searching for an honest man." (See Frontispiece to our former article, p. 177). On being asked "What is the most dangerous animal?" he said "Among wild animals, the slanderer; among tame, the flatterer." When he felt the approach of death (B.C. 324,) he sat down in the road leading to Olympia, and died calmly in the presence of a large number of people.

* See *Saturday Magazine*, Vol. XII., pp. 41 and 65.

TRUE PHILOSOPHY—True philosophy unfolds the design of final causes with a calm and humble wisdom. It finds the Creator everywhere, and always acting in wisdom and power. It traces the highest benevolence of intention, where the first aspect showed no apparent purpose, or one that seemed to tend to misery; offering new inducements to learn the first and last lesson of religion, and the ultimate attainment of human wisdom—resignation to the will of God.

TRUTH is the most compendious wisdom, and an excellent instrument for the speedy dispatch of business. It creates confidence in those we have to deal with, saves the labour of many inquiries, and brings things to issue in a few words.—*Spectator*.

NATURAL HISTORY OF THE MONTHS.

XII. DECEMBER.

And after him came next the chill December;
 Yet he, through merry feasting which he made,
 And great bonfires, did not the cold remember;
 His Saviour's birth so much his mind did glad.
 Upon a shaggy bearded goat he rode,
 The same wherewith Dan Jove, in tender years,
 They say was nourisht by the Idæan mayd;
 And in his hand a broad deepe bowle he beares,
 Of which he freely drinks a health to all his peeres.

SPENSER.

DARK December has at length arrived; the earth has completed another of her annual journeys, and has brought us to the middle of winter, to the season of chilliness and cloudiness, of cheerless skies, dreary prospects, and miry roads. Severe frost does not usually set in till towards the close of the month; but a damp and chilling state of the atmosphere often prevails, which is more unpleasant than frost. The days are now at the shortest, the time that the sun remains above the horizon being, on the twenty-first of the month, something less than eight hours, even in the southern parts of our island.

Vegetable nature seems to have fallen into a state of torpor, and to have retired, like the hibernating animals, to some secret mansion, there to sleep away the cold and unpropitious season, till the warmth of the ensuing spring shall arrive and awaken her to her accustomed energy. But this is not really the case: while apparently slumbering, she is actually engaged in preparing and compounding all the beautiful verdure, and the pleasing forms of the coming season. The fair profusion that adorns the spring, the richer flowers and fruits of summer, and the wide-spread bounties of autumn, are nothing more than the perfect results of what has been prepared and fabricated in silence and secrecy during these dull months. Had we the faculty to detect and to observe what is going on beneath the rugged and unsightly bark of the tree that now lifts its bare arms towards the sky, we should be filled with wonder and admiration at the sight: there should we behold the manufactory going on of "materials for its leaf and its bark; for the petals and parts of its flowers; the tubes and machinery that concoct the juices, modify the fluids, and furnish the substance of the fruit, with multitudes of other unknown operations and contrivances, too delicate and mysterious to be seen, or even comprehended, by the blindness, the defectibility of our nature—things of which we have no information, being beyond the range of any of the works or the employments of mankind."

Unvaried is the scene around us at this season, and therefore few are the remarks we need offer on the appearance of our fields and plains. Were it not for the evergreens, occasionally seen in hedge-rows, and more frequently clustered around our dwellings, all would be naked and barren; but these welcome trees and shrubs afford a pleasing contrast to the rest, and also screen us in some measure from the severity of the wintry blasts. The holly, (*Ilex aquifolium*) is one of the greatest ornaments of the season: there is a vigour and healthfulness about the tree, and a brightness in the contrast of its shining leaves and crimson berries, that make it deservedly a favourite. This tree is not only pleasing to the eye, but very useful; the provision it affords to poor hungry birds, during the severe weather, is of the utmost importance to them; the young shoots of the tree likewise are eaten by sheep and other animals. Holly-bushes, though slow of growth and difficult to rear, on account of the depredations committed on

them during the Christmas season (when holly is so abundantly used to decorate our churches and dwellings), form a handsome and substantial fence. Mistletoe (*viscus*) is another plant now in perfection. This curious parasite derives its sustenance from other living trees, and is often found growing on the stems and branches of oak-trees. The obscure manner of its growth and propagation, and the season of the year in which it flourishes, have caused this plant to be regarded with a great degree of superstitious veneration in times passed. In Druidical worship it was especially honoured, and was supposed to possess the virtue of healing many diseases. The sixth day of every month was set apart to search for it, and the joy of the people on discovering it was very great. This plant is supposed to be propagated by the mistletoe thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*) which feeds on the berries during winter. The glutinous nature of these berries causes them to adhere to the beak of the bird, and in his efforts to disengage them, "he strikes them against the parts of the tree on which he alights, and leaves the seeds sticking to the bark." This is the account usually given of the propagation of mistletoe: it has been found upon trial exceedingly difficult to place the seeds in such a manner as to prevent their being washed off by the rain, but if a slit or indentation be made in the bark, the seeds will most likely germinate and produce plants in any situation we may desire, provided the tree itself be favourable to the growth of the plant. It is not uncommon to find the mistletoe growing on apple-trees: the largest plant of the kind ever seen by the writer of this article, was found a short time since amid the diverging branches of an apple-tree of ancient growth.

Several species of moss, nourished by the moisture which is abundantly supplied to them during the early part of the month, attract our attention by their fresh and beautiful appearance, and the numerous family of lichens also offers many attractions to the botanist. The microscopic examination of these inconspicuous plants, reveals a world of wonders to the admirer of natural productions, and displays beauties which are wholly unknown to the majority of persons. The white, or yellow, or gray patches, which can scarcely fail to be noticed on the trunks and branches of trees, on old palings, on the walls of ancient edifices, on tomb-stones, and even on the paved way beneath our feet, if not too much frequented to allow of their growth—all these picturesque-looking stains, (as we should be apt to consider them,) giving a venerable and time-worn aspect to the site they occupy, are nothing less than different species of the interesting family of plants called lichens, of which Sir J. E. Smith, in his *English Botany*, has given coloured figures of about three hundred and fifty British species. This family is of considerable importance, as furnishing us with dyes, chiefly of different shades of purple and crimson; while to the inhabitants of polar regions it is of much greater value, since the rein-deer has little other provender than a species of lichen, (*L. rangiferinus*), called rein-deer moss, and since the Laplanders are almost wholly supplied by that useful animal with the means of existence. The nutritive properties of lichens are far greater, and their growth is far more considerable, in those regions of frost and snow, than in our own country; yet it is not improbable that a nourishing diet for invalids might at length be obtained from some of our native species, having similar properties, though not to the same extent, with the *Lichen islandicus*, or Iceland moss, which is imported for that purpose; or with the species of lichen, or fucus, which in 1830 was made use of by the starving population

of Ireland, and was called by them carrachan moss, and which has since become a favourite article of diet for the use of invalids.

When autumn and her fruits have passed away, (says Drummond,) and winter has succeeded

To rule the varied year,
Sullen and sad, with all his rising train;
Vapours, and clouds, and storms,

the vegetable creation seems abandoned to desolation and death. Yet the pursuits of the botanist are not even then necessarily suspended, since many cryptogamic plants, especially the mosses, put on their best attire, and to the inquiring eye exhibit a structure more beautiful than is to be perceived in the noblest trees of the forest. At this season, too, the fuci and other sea-weeds furnish an abundant harvest; and Nature, ever benignant, retains some of the natives of the bright summer, and furnishes her admirers with a few sweet specimens to compensate in some degree the loss of the more numerous and gaudy progeny of the sunny days that are gone by.

The flower-garden is not utterly despoiled of its attractions even in this gloomy month. A few lingering marigolds and anemones, some clusters of mignonette, and if the frost has not been very severe, a tolerable variety of chrysanthemums, are still to be seen; while the hardy aconite, and the hellebore, or Christmas rose, boldly put forth their blossoms. The China rose, scarcely appreciated amid the glow of bright forms in earlier months, is now an especial favourite, and its pale blossoms are much in request to give a delicate perfume to our apartments. The kitchen-garden exhibits long unbroken lines of fresh-looking green in the celery-beds which adorn it, and in the late-planted lettuces placed in the sheltered borders to stand the winter. The hardy endives spread out their curiously-curved leaves, or are undergoing the operation of blanching, and the ranks of cauliflower, brocoli, kale, and cabbage, give an orderly appearance to the well-arranged garden.

Soon after the *winter solstice*, or shortest day (December 21st), frost and snow usually set in; and while the cold becomes more piercing, the dryness of the ground, and the occasional brightness and clearness of the atmosphere, enable us to brave the season out of doors, with more pleasurable feelings than those with which we encountered the mists and mire of the previous weather. To those who are in the possession of health and strength, a continuance of frosty weather has many charms; they can enter into the pleasures of exercise and diversion at this season, and feel warmed and exhilarated by walking, riding, skating, &c. Let such persons remember with compassion the case of the aged poor, and, as far as they may be able, provide for the wants of those whose infirmities make them doubly susceptible of the cold, against which they are so scantily defended. The sufferings of the aged, and of the poor generally at this season, notwithstanding the efforts made to relieve them, must often distress the benevolent and feeling heart, and prove some alloy to the satisfaction which the approach of winter would otherwise inspire. For that winter is anticipated and loved by those who have learned to find charms in every season of the year, we are well aware: hence the language of the Poet:—

Though now no more the musing ear
Delights to listen to the breeze,
That lingers o'er the greenwood shade,
I love thee, Winter! well.

Sweet are the harmonies of Spring,
Sweet is the Summer's evening gale,
And sweet the Autumnal winds that shake
The many-coloured grove.

And pleasant to the sober'd soul
The silence of the wintry scene,

When Nature shrouds herself, entranced
In deep tranquillity.

Not undelightful now to roam
The wild heath, sparkling on the sight;
Not undelightful now to pace
The forest's ample rounds,

And see the spangled branches shine,
And mark the moss, of many a hue,
That varies the old tree's brown bark,
Or o'er the gray stone spreads.

And mark the cluster'd berries bright,
Amid the holly's gay green leaves;
The ivy round the leafless oak,
That clasps its foliage close.

So Virtue, diffident of strength,
Clings to Religion's firmer aid,
And, by Religion's aid upheld,
Endures calamity.—SOUTHEY.

We have now given our scattered observations on the Natural History of each month of the year; and in closing this interesting and instructive subject, we cannot but remark the rapid but stealthy progress of time, which has carried us on from one scene to another, has presented to us, in succession, the buds, and blossoms, and fruits of the year,—has scattered all these with the verdure and the foliage which surrounded them, and has brought us again to the point from which we set out, to the scene of desolation peculiar to winter. This annual course of things has taken place in the usual manner, and at the ordinary rate of time; yet in attempting to mark their progress we have found them apparently fleeting away with double speed. May our attempt to lead the attention of our readers to the beautiful succession of natural phenomena going on around them succeed in exciting a spirit of observation and inquiry, especially amongst the young, and may they be led to view the hand of God in everything.

One Spirit—His

Who wore the platted thorns with bleeding brows—
Rules universal nature. Not a flower
But shows some touch in freckle, streak, or stain,
Of His unrivall'd pencil. He inspires
Their balmy odours, and imparts their hues,
And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,
In grains as countless as the sea-side sands,
The forms with which He sprinkles all the earth.
Happy who walks with Him! whom what he finds
Of flavour or of scent in fruit or flower,
Or what he views of beautiful or grand
In Nature, from the broad majestic oak
To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,
Prompts with remembrance of a present God.

COWPER.

GEMS AND PRECIOUS STONES. V.

THE last siliceous gem we have to mention is the *OPAL*, a stone much softer than the ordinary quartz, but not on that account to be excluded from the list of gems, since its beautiful changing appearance has caused it to be held in very high estimation, in ancient as well as modern times.

We are told that a Roman senator, named Nonnius, preferred banishment to giving up a favourite opal, which was coveted by Mark Antony. This will give some idea of the value attached to these gems in former days; indeed it appears that at all times an opal of unusual size and lustre is exceedingly valuable, and will fetch an enormous sum. A stone of this kind was purchased by the Russian general, Prince Potemkin, for the sum of one thousand ducats, having been taken, as was affirmed, by Nadir Shah, from the head of a Gentoo idol, of which it formed one of the eyes. In the middle ages the opal was called *orphanus*, (the orphan,) from the circumstance of Albert the

Great having so named a beautiful opal which decorated the imperial crown. Leopold the Second, emperor of Germany, had in his possession a beautiful oriental stone, of one inch in diameter, and of immense value, which is generally described as an opal. This gem is also held in high esteem by the Turks.

The best opals are brought from Hungary and the Faroe Islands, and are distinguished by the epithets of *Noble*, *Precious*, and *Oriental*. According to Klaproth, this stone consists of nine-tenths pure silica, and the remaining tenth water. It is generally clear, limpid, and colourless, but exhibiting in a remarkable degree the peculiar kind of lustre, which, for want of a better appellation, has received that of *opalescence*, but which might more properly be called *iridescence*, or a similarity to the rainbow. The effect consists in the surface of the stone being apparently covered with spots and figures, of various shapes, and of the most brilliant colours. These change their forms, mingle with each other, and shift their places, according to the relative situations of the light, the stone, and the eye of the observer. In order to favour, as much as possible, these beautiful appearances, the opal is seldom cut with facets, like other stones, but in the form called *cabochon*, that is, with a smooth convex surface, without angles. It has been frequently proved that all the colours of the opal may entirely change or disappear when the stone is divided into pieces: it would appear, therefore, that the surface of the stone is peculiarly formed to produce the refraction of the sun's rays, which creates so beautiful an effect.

The stone called *semi-opal* is not transparent, nor does it exhibit the vivid iridescence of the *noble opal*. It is consequently little esteemed, though we must except the variety called *hydropheane*, which is naturally white and opaque, but on being immersed in water, it absorbs a large quantity of that fluid, and becomes quite transparent, and sometimes even opalescent: on drying, however, it returns to its former state.

Opals are generally discovered in detached pieces, in an envelope of different kinds of stone, from the size of a pin's head to that of a walnut. An immense number of small grains of opal are sometimes found dispersed through the substance of porphyry; in which case the beautiful appearance of the porphyry causes it to be used as an article of jewellery. The darker the colour of the stone, the more brilliant of course do the opals appear. A curious process is therefore adopted to blacken the porphyry, which consists of first soaking the stone in oil, and then subjecting it to the action of fire, by which the oil is carbonized, and made to fill the pores of the stone with a fine kind of soot. The difficulty of obtaining this gem of sufficient size to display all its beauties, makes it very precious. A fine oriental opal has been estimated at double the price of a sapphire of the same size.

The next stone, in respect of hardness, is the modern *CHRYSOLEITE*, thought to be the topaz of the ancients. It was called by Hæly the *Peridot*, and still retains the name in France. That it is not much esteemed as a jewel, is apparent by the common saying of the French lapidaries—

Who two peridots doth own,
More than needful hath by one.

Its colours are various shades of green and reddish-brown, but never of a brilliant description. It sometimes approaches to olive-green, and is then called *Olivine*, but its usual colour is what is termed *pistachio green*. The great defect of this stone is its softness, which causes it to become dull, and to lose its polish in wear as an ornament.

The substance called *Turquoise* (as coming from Tur-

key) is of small value, but is frequently used as an ornament, on account of its beautiful colour, which is a very pleasing opaque and delicate blue. Perhaps its opacity ought to prevent it from being considered as a gem, but this very imperfection has been the cause of the high estimation in which it is held in some countries. The term *turquoise* is applied to two widely different substances. The first is called *bone turquoise*, and actually consists of fossil remains, especially teeth, which, while imbedded in the earth, have absorbed a solution of copper, and thus acquired their beautiful hue. This colour may in some specimens be deepened by the application of heat; in others, by the same application, entirely removed. The turquoise is the only petrification which is submitted to the tool of the graver. The other kind is called *mineral turquoise*, or *Calaite*, and is found massive only at Nichabour, in Persia. The composition of this stone has been so differently stated, that it must be considered very uncertain.

Lapis Lazuli is so named from the word *azul*, used by the Arabians to designate this substance. It is sometimes reckoned among the gems, but is now very seldom seen as an ornament. The specimens of this stone which are of a rich blue colour, inclining to purple, have been called *Oriental*, while the pale blue are less esteemed. Our lapis lazuli was the *sapphire* of the ancients, and was also called by them *cyanus*, denoting "the colour of the sky." Its greatest value at present arises from its supplying us with the beautiful blue pigment called *ultramarine*, which, owing to the softness of the stone, is easily obtained by pulverization. A method has lately been discovered by which this stone, or its powder, may be made artificially. The process is cheap, but somewhat complex, and the substance seems to owe its colour to a peculiar compound of sulphur with soda.

Lapis lazuli is met with in various countries. That of Asia and Africa, however, is far superior to such as is found in Germany and Bohemia; and which is too often passed off for the finer sort.

The *Vesuvian*, or *idiocrase*, is also known by the name of the *brown volcanic hyacinth*. It is prepared by the lapidaries of Naples, and sold as a *Vesuvian gem*, or such as is procured from the burning mountain. Its value is trifling, and it is seldom used as an article of jewellery. Its colour is usually reddish-brown, but it is likewise found of an olive, or blackish-green.

THE DYAKS OF BORNEO.—That portion of their creed which obtains the greatest influence over their mode of life, arises from a supposition which they entertain that the owner of every human head which they can procure will serve them in the next world. The system of human sacrifice is, upon this account, carried to so great an extent, that it totally surpasses that which is practised by the Battas of Sumatra, or, I believe, by any people yet known. A man cannot marry until he has procured a human head; and he who is in possession of several may be distinguished by his proud and lofty bearing; for the greater number of heads which a man has obtained, the greater will be his rank in the next world; and this opinion naturally induces his associates to consider him entitled to superior consideration upon earth. A man of consequence cannot be buried until a human head has been procured by his friends; and at the conclusion of peace between two tribes, the chief of each presents a prisoner to the other to be sacrificed on the spot. The loss of human life occasioned by these latter-named ceremonies falls far short of that which is produced by the necessity of obtaining a human head to grace the marriage rites, a necessity which tends so strongly to check the increase of population, that had the lawgiver who introduced it apprehended that the island would speedily become too thickly inhabited, he could not have hit upon a more efficacious mode of prevention.—*EARLE'S Voyage to the Eastern Seas.*

THE SYRIAN COAST. V.

THIRTY miles of mountainous country lie between Saïde and Beyrout, the roots of Lebanon here running down to the sea. This rugged tract, for many miles inland, is mainly inhabited by the Druses, a people whose origin and faith are alike involved in obscurity. They doubtless occupied their present station in the time of the Crusades, but as little community of feeling existed between the Franks and the inhabitants of Lebanon, so nothing seems to have been known of the varieties of name, origin, and religion, which are now seen to exist among them. When Syria was conquered by the Turks, (A.D. 1516,) the mountaineers valiantly defended themselves, and at length took the station of tributaries, rather than of subjects. The Druses, though far from the most numerous, conducted themselves with such bravery and address, that the task of collecting and paying over the *miri*, or tribute, was committed to one of their chiefs, whose authority was extended not only over their Christian neighbours, the Maronites, but also to the various schismatic Mohammedan sects, the Mutualis, Yezidis, Ansaries, Ismaelies, &c., who occupy numerous mountain fastnesses along the line of Anti-Libanus. The power of the prince, however, is little more than nominal among the Druses themselves, the sheiks of each village (especially those of the same family as the emir,) being the real rulers; everything, indeed, has a feudal aspect.

One of the princes of the Druses, named Fakr-el-Din, early in the seventeenth century, conceived the idea of rendering himself independent of the Porte, and for this purpose entered into some communication with the Italian traders who repaired to the coast. These, returning to Europe, spread the news of a people in Lebanon, called Druses, who abhorred the Mohammedans; whence it was hastily inferred that they must be Christians, and some writers went so far, as to propagate the notion that they were the descendants of the retainers of a Count de Dreux, who was conveniently imagined to have settled in Lebanon during the era of the Crusades. Some time after Fakr-el-Din visited Italy in person, and gave encouragement to a theory so likely to procure him succour against the Porte, who, having discovered his design, was now preparing to crush him. He remained in Italy for some years, his country being governed by his son in his absence, but upon his return, having disgusted his subjects by an affectation of European habits, he was gradually deserted by them, his son killed in battle, and himself betrayed and carried a prisoner to Constantinople, where he was strangled by order of the Sultan, (A.D. 1631.)

The attention of the learned being thus turned to the Druses, it was soon discovered that their language was Arabic, without any admixture of a Western tongue, and that all that could be ascertained respecting their customs and religion was utterly irreconcilable with the theory of their Christian origin. Although the matter can hardly be regarded as fully settled, (for the sources of the information are not beyond the suspicion of prejudice,) it seems probable that they were originally disciples of the Fatimite Caliph, Hakem*, who upon his death sought safety in Lebanon†, from time immemorial the refuge of fanatic sectaries proscribed in other quarters. With some of these, (possibly the descendants of the old Canaanites,) they seem to have formed an alliance, in-

* Hakem reigned in Egypt at the beginning of the eleventh century. He was a madman, who proclaimed himself a divinity, destroyed alike churches and mosques, and was at length assassinated. The Druses, however, believe that he still exists.

† They are said to have been conducted by one Mohammed ben Ismael, surnamed El Druzi; whence the name of the sect.

corporating their tenets with their own; and, if the accounts of travellers are to be credited, they still retain, and practise in secret, the idolatrous worship of a calf, have certain secret doctrines disclosed only to initiated classes; which are stated to inculcate the indifference of all human actions, and carry these out to an extent subversive of all the bonds of civil society. Dissimulation appears habitual to them, and when at a distance from home they assume the guise of devout Mohammedans; and their chief emir has been known occasionally to receive baptism, in order to conciliate the Maronites. The practice of blood-revenge is strictly enforced among them, their fanatic valour is also remarkable, and they are equally detested and feared by all their neighbours.

However bad their moral character, the Druses are allowed to be industrious and hospitable. Their country is a safe refuge from the tyranny of the pachas of the plains, for they will endure any extremity, rather than give up a fugitive, whatever his country, or his religion. They are almost all proprietors of land, which they cultivate most diligently; their mountains are cut into terraces, water-courses are constructed, mulberry and olive trees, abound and in the winter they employ themselves in some rude manufactures of gold thread, silk, and woollen, their clothing being almost universally produced at home. This is sufficiently characteristic. The men wear loose breeches, a waistcoat and a cloak, all of coarse woollen, black with white stripes, in which the chiefs have threads of gold interwoven; they also wear a large flat spreading turban, and are girded with a white or red fringed sash, and formerly never stirred abroad, unarmed. The women, who are described as good-looking, are dressed in a blue jacket and petticoat, go bare-footed, and have their hair divided into plaits, to which silver coins are often appended. When in full dress, they also wear a horn, made of tin or silver, and a foot at least in length, upon their foreheads, from which descends a white veil, which envelopes the whole body, and descends to the feet.

The number of the Druses has been very variously estimated, but seems at all times to have been greatly overstated. The official returns of the Egyptian government give but about 170,000 as the whole population of the mountains, of whom the Druses form only one-fifth part; yet such is their bravery and intelligence, that they have very long been the leading class. All who in this quarter have aimed at distressing the Turkish government, whether rebel pachas or foreign foes, have looked for assistance from the Druses. They were only prevented by intestine feuds, from assisting the Sheik Daher, who reckoned on their support; they were in communication with the Russians when their fleet swept the Syrian coast in 1770; they were well disposed to join the French in 1799, but were deterred by the event of the siege of Acre.

The principal town of the Druses is Deir-el-Kamr, situated on the side of a mountain, about five-and-twenty miles to the south-east of Beyrout. Its population is estimated at 5000 or 6000, the majority of

‡ They are stated to be divided into three classes, the Djahelia, (Ignorant, the common people,) and two classes of the initiated, termed Akkals, (Intelligent.) These last form a kind of priestly order, and are also the militia leaders.

§ In 1760, an aga of the Janissaries took refuge among them, on account of some quarrel with the pacha of Damascus. He was demanded by the pacha from the chief emir, who in turn demanded him of the sheik in whose house he resided. The latter positively refused to give him up, upon which the emir gave him notice that he would cut down fifty of his olive-trees, (a main article of wealth in this region,) daily, until he complied, and immediately began to carry his threat into effect. The trees were felled for twenty successive days, when the other sheiks took part with their neighbour, and a civil war would have ensued, but that the Turk, unknown to his host, generously sought an asylum elsewhere.

them being Christians. Upon the opposite hill is Beteddin, the palace of the emir, a modern building in the Saracenic style of architecture; it stands upon a platform of rock, steep and precipitous on three sides, and is described by a recent traveller as a noble structure.

The whole *ménage* strongly reminded one of the old feudal times: the warders lazily stretched at the gate—horses saddled and picketed in the outer court, to be ready at a moment's call—retainers lounging about in all directions, the household consisting of two hundred persons—hounds basking in the sun—falconers, with hawks upon their arms—all these objects concurred to form a highly interesting and animated scene.

Some of the public apartments were shown to us: the council-chamber, or grand reception-room, was handsome, of square form, having the centre crowned by a dome, which rested upon four pointed arches, supported by light and elegant pillars. The walls, round which ran a cushioned divan, were covered with arabesque painting, having small landscapes in some of the compartments tolerably well executed: the floor was of marble.

One of the mountains that surround Saide has numerous caverns, of large dimensions, scooped out in its face, which still exhibit some remains of ancient carvings in bas-relief, and some paintings, and bearing a general resemblance to the Tombs of the Kings at Alexandria, have been named the Sepulchres of the Kings of Syria, with what truth it seems impossible to determine.

Proceeding northward towards Beyrout, a deep and rapid stream, called Nahr-el-Aweli, is crossed by a large stone bridge. The coast next recedes to form a bay, about four miles across, at the bottom of which is a small village, called Jee, believed to occupy the site of Porphyriion, once a place of some consequence, but of which only a few broken pillars and some shapeless ruins remain. Beyond the bay occurs the river Damour, the ancient Tamyras, on the further side of which the hills commence which terminate in the promontory of Beyrout. Numerous ruins are scattered over the adjacent country.

Beyrout stands upon a gentle rising ground, washed on three sides by the sea*, but opening on the fourth on to a rich plain, planted with olive, mulberry, fig, orange, and other trees. It is a place of considerable trade, exporting silk, cotton, and corn, and receiving rice and tobacco, although its harbour (formed by a mole composed of granite columns,) can only admit boats. Its population is estimated at about 12,000, the majority of whom are Christians.

At Beyrout (says Dr. Bowring) the American missionaries have schools of some reputation. One large one, attached to the premises of the mission, is stated to be more deserving of the name of college than any other institution in Syria; for, in addition to studying Arabic grammatically, arithmetic, geography, astronomy, and chemistry, &c., with the aid of apparatus, are included. I had an opportunity of seeing many of the Syrian youths who are educated in the American missionary schools, and found them more advanced than any other boys of their age in Syria. They are all taught English.

Beyrout is the ancient Berytus, a Phœnician city, whose name is said to be derived from a temple of the idol Baal-Berith, which it once contained. After suffering severely both from the Assyrians and the Macedonians, it was destroyed in the civil wars which led to the occupation of Syria by the Romans; being rebuilt by that people, it was raised to the dignity of a colony by Augustus, and received from him the appellation of Colonia Felix Julia, in honour of his daughter, and also in allusion to its pleasant situation. It was next bestowed upon Herod, who built an am-

phitheatre, some remains of which still exist. Here it was that he held an assembly of his chief men, in which two of his sons were condemned to death on the charge of conspiring against their father's life. When again in the hands of the Romans, a celebrated school of jurisprudence was established at Berytus, (perhaps by the Emperor Alexander Severus, a native of Phœnicia,) which subsisted until the city was destroyed by an earthquake (A.D. 551). In less than eighty years after Syria was overrun by the Mohammedans, and in their hands Berytus remained until captured by the Crusaders, under Baldwin the First, in 1110, who retained it till 1187. It then surrendered to Saladin, but was by him ceded to the Franks in 1192, and possessed by them until their final expulsion from the Holy Land. It then fell into decay. During the war against Sheik Daher, Beyrout was seized by Djezzar (afterwards pacha of Acre,) having been before twice bombarded by the Russian fleet, who upon one occasion landed and burned 300 houses. The ancient defences being thus destroyed, Djezzar erected new walls, in the construction of which he levelled several ancient edifices for the sake of their materials; so that now few remains of antiquity are to be seen, except the foundations of the ancient walls, which extend far beyond the present ones, and run a considerable distance into the sea. Beyrout fell into the hands of the pasha of Egypt in 1832; and, as he had a large force assembled there, it became the scene of the first warlike operations of the Allies in the present war. It was cannonaded by the shipping on the 11th and 12th of September last, while the troops effected a landing at Djournie, a short distance to the northward, and being on the 10th of October abandoned by the Egyptian forces, who on that day received a severe defeat, was immediately occupied by the Allies.



HEAD-DRESS OF DRUSE FEMALES.

MAN loses himself in vain projects. His long remembrances and his keen foresight create for him suffering in the past and future. His imagination brings forth errors; his liberty, crimes: but the abuse of his faculties does not disprove their excellence. Let him consecrate to directing them aright that time which he has hitherto lost in mourning over his aberrations, and he will have reason to be grateful to the Creator, for having given him the most exalted rank among sublunary beings.

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* The sea to the north bears the name of St. George's Bay, from a tradition current with all classes, that on its shore took place the combat between the patron saint of England and the dragon.